

Applicants have resubmitted a Rule 1.131 affidavit eliminating Yanase et al. as a reference. Yanase et al. has an international filing date prior to November 29, 2000. Thus the Examiner may rely only on the U.S. filing date of Yanase et al. which is February 16, 2001. Applicants have sworn behind the U.S. filing date of Yanase et al. The remaining cited art fails to disclose all of the limitations of Claims 25-30. Thus, Claims 25-30 are not taught or suggested by the cited art.

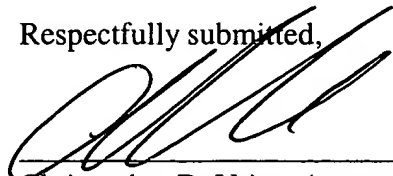
If the Examiner relies on personal knowledge that the apparatus of the present invention is obvious, Applicants respectfully request support for this assertion in the form of an affidavit that shall be subject to contradiction or explanation by the affidavits of the Applicant and other persons under 37 C.F.R. 1.104 (d)(2).

CONCLUSION

The entire Office Action dated January 6, 2004, has been carefully reviewed and this response is submitted as being fully responsive thereto. In view of the preceding remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 25-30 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request such action at the Examiner's earliest convenience. If the Examiner believes that personal contact would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, he is requested to call the undersigned at his earliest convenience.

If for some reason a fee needs to be paid, as well as one-month extension fee, please charge our Deposit Account No. 07-0960, which may be due.

Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosure